



"In partnership, proudly serving our communities"

Strategic Plan 2006-2008



Lethbridge Regional Police Service Strategic Plan 2006-2008

Vision Statement

The vision of the Lethbridge Regional Police Service is to sustain and enhance the safety and security of our community.

Strategic Areas

There are four key strategic areas to achieving the vision of the Lethbridge Regional Police Service.

Traffic Safety

Traffic safety is an area that the community survey of 2002 tells us the number one area identified for more attention and less attention by the police.¹ Between the years 2001 and 2004, collisions have declined in Lethbridge by slightly more than 10%. During this time conventional enforcement activities have seen a significant increase in traffic summons issued. Fatal motor vehicle collisions have fluctuated over this time frame, from a high of 5 in 2002 to a low of 1 in 2004. In this time there has been an increase in the number of licensed drivers in Lethbridge by 5.8% and the number of registered motor vehicles has climbed by 7.4%.²

Historically, the Traffic Response Unit has used a “Triple E” approach to traffic safety in Lethbridge. This includes programs involving education, enforcement and engineering. More recently, particular attention has been paid to activities such as Selective Traffic Enforcement Programs (STEP), Provincial Occupant Restraint Programs, Impaired Driving Checkstops, random traffic enforcement projects and the addition of a second photo radar unit.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Create an overall reduction in collisions in the Lethbridge Region by 2008.
2. Reduction of collisions at identified high risk locations by 2008.
3. Reduction in the number of persons from high risk driver groups that are involved in collisions.

¹ Leslie Vaala PhD. 2003. “Community Survey 2002: A Report of the Lethbridge Police Service’s Survey.”

² Constable Kevin Talbot. 2005. “Lethbridge Regional Police Service Traffic Response Unit 2006-2008 Traffic Collision Reduction Strategy.

Crime and Disorder

Organized Crime

Organized Crime is economically motivated illicit activity undertaken by any group, association or other body consisting of two or more individuals, whether formally or informally organized, where the negative impact of said activity could be considered significant from an economic, social, violence generation, health and safety and/or environmental perspective.

Organized Crime groups are functioning in Lethbridge mainly through the sale of illicit drugs such as cocaine, crack cocaine, Marijuana production and sales, and Methamphetamine. They also are involved in stolen property, escorts, exotic dancers, identity theft, fraud, Internet crimes, counterfeit money and money laundering.³ The Lethbridge Regional Police Service Criminal Intelligence Unit works hand in hand with the Calgary Criminal Intelligence Unit, Edmonton Integrated Intelligence Unit, the RCMP, Medicine Hat Police Service, other Southern Alberta Law Enforcement Agencies and Criminal Intelligence Services Alberta in order to combat Organized Crime groups.

With the creation in 2004 of the North and South Integrated Response to Organized Crime Teams (IROC), in Edmonton and Calgary the other smaller cities of Alberta and rural communities in Alberta have seen an increase in the appearance and illicit activity of organized crime groups. Due to the presence of these organized crime investigation units and the need to expand to previously untapped markets, these criminals have moved from the bigger centres in order to evade detection and continue with their illegal activities.⁴ Organized crime groups such as Asian gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs and aboriginal gangs are expected to make their presence known in Lethbridge though their activities surrounding the drug trade and other illicit activities.

With the evolution of computers, the internet and the ability to impact the lives of persons from distant locations through the use of technology, there is an urgent need for Police Services to better understand and respond to the needs of Albertans as they become prey to those intent on committing crimes with the use of technology. Lethbridge Regional Police have been involved in more investigations involving the Internet and other computer crimes for such offences as theft, fraud, false documents, luring, child pornography, threats, hate crimes and harassment. There has also been an increase in international investigations involving theft and fraud, as the Internet knows no bounds in the world.

³ Sergeant David Maze. 2005. Strategic Planning: Crime and Disorder: Organized Crime.”

⁴ Sergeant David Maze. 2005. Strategic Planning: Crime and Disorder: Organized Crime.”

The service has utilized the technical investigation sections of the Calgary Police Service and the RCMP, but as these crimes increase the service will have to train and maintain it's own Technical Investigations Section. This is and will be the fastest growing crime trend in policing for years to come as the full potential of the Internet and a large portion of our school age population grow up with and operate daily in cyber space.⁵

Desired Outcomes:

1. Reduction in organized crime group activity in the Lethbridge Region.
2. Reduction in emerging street gang activity in the Lethbridge Region.
3. Capacity to efficiently address computer based crimes.

Property Crime

Commercial Break ins are being committed with more frequency where items of high value are sought and in some cases more careful planning is evident, rather than the previously more common smash and grab style of break in. Residential break ins are also increasing with the targets being jewellery, DVD's CD's gaming electronics and liquor.⁶ If left unchecked these types of crime are expected to increase further.

There are a number of challenges facing the police in this area of crime. Specifically, target source based crimes tend to be more sophisticated and difficult to detect and monitor, and stolen property tends to be moved quickly from one location to another. Offenders who commit residential break ins are often times stealing the property to support drug habits and the property goes directly to a dealer to pay for drug debts. In addition information sharing between law enforcement agencies is not timely and is sometimes incomplete. Over all, the criminals that commit these types of crimes are repeat offenders who the police have seen in the cycle of apprehension, incarceration, release and re-commit.

Motor vehicle thefts have been increasing in the region as well. The majority of the thefts are committed for transportation or for use in other crime, as the recovery rate is very high. Newer vehicles equipped with alarms deter the theft of newer high value vehicles, which creates a higher demand for older vehicles.

⁵ Sergeant David Maze. 2005. Strategic Planning: Crime and Disorder: Organized Crime.”

⁶ Sergeant Michael Ballman, 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Jim Carriere subject Strategic Planning – Property Crime.

Thefts from businesses, vehicles and individuals continues to grow annually. The most prevalent increases are seen in the area of theft from vehicles where the most prominent targets are cash and unidentifiable property that is easily sold or pawned. Multiple offenders targeting multiple areas of the city without any organization seems prevalent in these theft cases. Property is difficult to identify once pawned or sold and is not recovered in many cases.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Reduction in the number of property related crimes in the Lethbridge Region.
2. Reduction in the transfer of stolen property.

Downtown Policing

The Lethbridge Regional Police Service and the Police Service before have been policing the downtown area of Lethbridge on foot, in cars and vans and on bicycles in one form or another for 100 years. The police service once policed the majority of the city on foot and migrated to using police cars and vans. This put the police out of touch with the people and businesses in the core of the city. The police responded by reinstating single person foot patrols in a stand alone unit separate from the patrol units and then a two person stand alone unit. The concerns expressed by downtown businesses were intoxicated persons, panhandling, police response times, criminal activity, and the lack of police visibility and community interaction.

Through 2003, the downtown patrol was expanded to eight members, that being one acting sergeant and seven constables. The model had two members attached to each of the four patrol teams under the direct operational supervision of the team's sergeant and staff sergeant. Feedback was generally positive from the members of the business revitalization zone as their concerns were being addressed.⁷ The members that were assigned to the downtown foot patrol through 2003 noted their concerns regarding their assignment as such issues as being used to backfill other patrol zones in the city, being dispatched out of their patrol areas and not being allotted sufficient time to invest in their community problems affecting downtown.

In 2004 the downtown foot patrol unit became staffed with eight constables assigned to the four patrol teams under the direct day-to-day supervision of the team sergeants and staff sergeants. The Community Resource Unit Sergeant was tasked with the overall strategic planning, supervision and evaluation of the unit. These issues have continued to be felt by the downtown foot patrol and some of the members of the downtown Business

⁷ Sergeant Scott Chadsey. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Bill Kaye dated 2003-12-18 captioned Year End Report 2003 – Foot Patrol Unit

Revitalization Zone (BRZ) are feeling their concerns and issues are not being effectively met.⁸

In an effort to examine and evaluate the downtown policing model, the Divisional Commander has undertaken a consultative process of meetings and information gathering with the business stakeholders, partners and involved police personnel. This process is expected to develop a comprehensive plan to provide the capacity of the police service to address the needs and issues of citizens living and working in the downtown area.

Desired Outcomes:

1. An efficient and effective policing model for the downtown area of Lethbridge.
2. An environment in the Lethbridge downtown where urban decay issues and safe communities issues are addressed and reversed.

New Types of Crimes

In the past few years there has been an increase in economic crimes. These crimes involve such offences as fraud, theft and forgery. The incidents of fraud have been increasing in both creativity and sophistication. This past year has seen investigations involving a \$275,000.00 bank cheque kiting scheme, a counterfeit money/travelers cheque ring and three high profile, large monetary internal thefts from businesses totaling nearly \$750,000. These investigations are labour intensive and time consuming. Search warrants for bank documents and financial records are required and need to be analyzed to ensure successful prosecutions.⁹

Another growing area of concern is cyber crime. Cyber crime is defined as any criminal activity that utilizes a computer or new technology to assist in the desired criminal act. This can include, but certainly not limited to, cyber stalking of children, the trading and production of child pornography, identity theft, counterfeiting, computer viruses and the theft of business and intellectual property and the destruction of data for various gains.¹⁰ Our region has been touched by one occurrence which is currently before the courts where a Toronto man attended Lethbridge after “meeting” a child on the Internet, had a sexual relationship with her and was preparing to take her back to Toronto with her. In the years 2000 to 2004 there have been 13

⁸ Ted Stilson, Lethbridge Downtown BRZ. 2005. Email to Sergeant Jamie Fisher dated 2005-02-28.

⁹ Sergeant Michael Reeder and Sergeant Arthur Tamminga. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Jim Carriere captioned Strategic Planning – Economic crimes Unit.

¹⁰ Sergeant Michael Reeder and Sergeant Arthur Tamminga. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Jim Carriere captioned Strategic Planning – Economic crimes Unit.

cases of production of child pornography and 5 cases of luring a child using a computer investigated in Lethbridge.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Reduction in the number of persons victimized through economic and cyber crimes and decrease incidents of future criminal behavior.

Healthy Organization

Succession Planning

With the understanding that a reliable Succession Plan is a living document, the Human Resources Unit must research and make in an analysis of existing human resources data in order to forecast attrition rates and growth trends. This succession plan must encompass and project demographic growth within the jurisdiction of the Lethbridge Regional Police Service, retirements from the Service, and recruitment needs to keep pace with the advancing organizational stressors placed on the Police Service itself.

As the Service transitions to the Alberta Provincial Recruiting Standards, greater efforts will be taken to ensure the candidates meet and exceed minimum standards to replenish the vacancies left by retiring senior members. However, it is not enough to fill these vacancies with warm and capable bodies. Our succession plans must include attracting members for other Police Services with knowledge, skills and abilities, who see our Service as an opportunity to continue the growth and development of their careers.

¹¹

Desired Outcomes:

1. A comprehensive succession plan that focuses on providing for succession in all functions within the police service, and includes strategies for retention of experienced employees and recruiting of new employees.

Healthy environment to recruit and retain the best of the best

The Human Resources Unit will work to maintain the organizational and human resources capacity of the Service in light of the Province wide demands placed on the available pool of applicants due to unprecedented trends: demographic growth and retirement of the “Baby Boomer” generation. To maintain the stability of its’ organization, the leadership of the Service

¹¹ Sergeant Merle Fuller. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Don Lamont captioned Strategic Planning – Healthy Organization, Career Development and Enhancement.

must develop strategies and endeavor to retain the experience and expertise developed in personnel, in addition to attracting members from other Police Services with the same knowledge, skills and abilities.

The Human Resources Unit will research and examine opportunities and initiatives to attract and recruit applicants that accurately reflect the diverse demographics of our community, who appear to have a high capacity for success within the field of Law Enforcement. As the Service transitions to the Alberta Provincial Recruiting Standards, greater efforts will be taken to ensure the candidates meet and exceed minimum standards to replenish the vacancies left by retiring senior members.¹²

Desired Outcomes:

1. Recruitment of qualified police candidates and retention of these officers through to retirement, once they are trained.

Opportunity for Career Development and Enhancement

The Human Resources Unit will work to enhance career advancement opportunities for the members of the Service as we partner with other police agencies and the Lethbridge Community College. As pointed out earlier, a stressor facing policing in the 21st Century is the matter of fiscal restraint. Fiscal restraint not only impacts the availability of funding for training for the members, it also affects the availability of training and is simply a matter of supply and demand. The demand for training police officers often outstrips the current availability of agencies and college to provide this training at a cost effective rate to police agencies. Over the past several years, sources of training have dwindled as training centres refocus on the immediate priorities.

A relief from this shortage of training comes from two sources: Community Colleges and private educational providers. To this end, the Lethbridge Regional Police Service and the Human Resources Unit will partner with the Lethbridge Community College and other police agencies in Southern Alberta to provide recruit training and other in-service training opportunities at the college through the Centre for Advancement of Criminal Justice. Leadership development training will also be a priority as a good number of senior personnel leave the Service.¹³

¹² Sergeant Merle Fuller. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Don Lamont captioned Strategic Planning – Healthy Organization, Career Development and Enhancement.

¹³ Sergeant Merle Fuller. 2005. Memo to Staff Sergeant Don Lamont captioned Strategic Planning – Healthy Organization, Career Development and Enhancement.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Establish a level of expertise within the service that allows for continued appropriate and professional response to any task or need faced by the service.

Enhancement of the Relationship Communication Between Commission, Executive, Community and Staff.

Communication is key in the organization to ensure that consistent and clear messaging occurs at all levels of the service, both internally and externally. Clear and timely communication to the organization is crucial to addressing issues so that affected people are not left to examine and evaluate decisions through their own paradigm. Communication strategies have been historically were employed on an ad hoc basis within the service, and external communications through media outlets were sporadic.

More recently, the appointment of a public affairs officer has lead to closer examination of the need for communication strategies on a variety of issues within the organization, and more consistent messaging. Externally, the consistent messaging lends itself to keeping the public informed about the services and actions of the police on a more frequent basis.

Desired Outcomes:

1. A written communications strategy that addresses communications both internal and external to the police service on any presenting issue regarding the police service and it's operations.
2. Internal and external communications strategies are of primary consideration in most activities undertaken by the police service.

Community Involvement

Community Engagement

As the population grows in our communities, demands on the police service experience a proportionate increase. Citizens tend to look outside of themselves to help in dealing with persistent issues and rely on having problems solved solely by the municipal government and/or the police. The truth is, when the community is engaged, the solutions to problems are adhered to as the community has more ownership and control over their own issues.

In recent history there have been problems such as youths causing problems in the Uplands Community at Chinook Lake, downtown issues with

intoxicated transient people collecting in Galt Gardens and an increasing rate of property crime in the industrial area of the city. Solutions to these problems are found by engaging the community in order to explore what the issues are, rather than have the police dictate responses without an understanding of underlying issues and concerns. The police dictated strategy seems to work for a limited time, but once the police move on to other community issues, old habits return.

Embracing and utilizing community engagement strategies creates the necessary ownership of the issues and solutions by the community. Community Crime Councils, which provide the opportunity for residents to become involved in addressing crime in their community using volunteer councils to meet regularly and discuss concerns, identify issues and develop possible solutions¹⁴ and town hall meetings are valuable ways to have community groups plan and implement proactive, solution based crime prevention strategies specific to a particular community.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Increased community ownership and control over crime issues and solutions, by both the community and the members of the service.

Partnerships

Over the past number of years the police service has had successful partnerships that serve to increase capacity by creating new and more efficient ways of doing business and delivering services. Partnerships that created the Public Safety Communications Center, the Domestic Violence Action Team, the ALERT program and Business Watch are excellent examples of this. In addition, partnerships have been realized that provide financial support for capital purchases in support of operations. An excellent examples of these partnerships are the canine program where businesses like Wal Mart, Runner's Soul and individuals came together for the new dog purchases.

Through partnerships, the police service is able to enhance its efficiency and empower the community through participation and ownership. With the increasing demands of police officers, and always available source of partnerships in the community to help meet those demands, it makes sense to identify and seek out partnerships.

14 Monica Pauls, MA. 2004. An Evaluation of the Neighborhood Empowerment Team (Net): Edmonton Police Service. Viewed 2005-04-07. http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/publications/policing/net_eval_e.asp.

Desired Outcomes:

1. Effective partnerships are established and maintained that advance the capacity of the police service and community to respond to crime and crime prevention.

Regionalization

The reality of modern policing is that it incurs increased expenses on an annual basis. It is the responsibility of every municipal government to provide its citizens with effective and efficient policing. In smaller jurisdictions, such as Coaldale, that becomes increasingly more challenging as new trends emerge in organized crime, infrastructure costs, technology and training of police officers. Organized crime has recently been detected in smaller rural settings (Didsbury, Chestermere Lake) where criminals believe law enforcement may not be well enough equipped to handle commercial activities around the drug trade. With Regionalization, Coaldale has realized the benefit of access to such specialized units as the Forensic Identification Unit, K-9, Traffic Response, Tactical, Detectives and the Explosive Disposal Unit, just to name a few. In return, the City of Lethbridge has gained an increase in human and financial resources, which has enhanced our organization and our ability to respond better to the citizens of Lethbridge.¹⁵

Currently, the province of Alberta provides per capita police funding for communities with populations in excess of 5000 people. With a policing grant of \$16 per person these communities are free to establish their own policing services by creating and maintaining their own police service, arranging contract policing through the RCMP or by engaging the services of a regional police service. For communities under this threshold, policing services are provided through the existing provincial policing contract with the RCMP and they have no options available where they would receive funding for policing. With the costs of policing ever increasing, along with current crime trends and future threats, many more communities are likely to turn to or be pushed toward regional policing models in order to save provincial and municipal tax dollars. Support for regionalization exists with the provincial government through the office of the Solicitor General.¹⁶

¹⁵ John Middleton-Hope. 2005. Speech to the Lethbridge breakfast Club 2005-02-23.

¹⁶ Annette Bidniak. Quoted in the article Cities, towns take team approach to policing. Tarina White. Calgary Herald 2005-04-05 pB3.

Desired Outcomes:

1. The Lethbridge Regional Police Service provides regional response to specific issues utilizing the resources of such units as Canine, Explosives Disposal / CBRN and the Tactical Team.
2. The Lethbridge Regional Police Service serves as a model for community driven regionalization, and has open communication lines with other communities and the Solicitor General's Office to create opportunities for expansion of the regional police service to other communities in the region.